



Tropical Audubon Society

The Voice of Conservation in South Florida

President

December 11, 2013

Jose Francisco Barros

Honorary Director

Members of the Planning and Zoning board:

Eibi Aizenstat, Chairperson, Marshall Bellin, Jeffrey Flanagan, Vice Chairperson, Julio Grabiell, Maria Menendez, Alberto Perez

Roger Hammer

City Hall Commission Chambers

Board of Directors

405 Biltmore Way

Coral Gables, Florida 33134

Alan Steinberg

Re: Application for lot split on 6801 Granada Boulevard

Brian Rapoza

Lewis Milledge, Esq.

Dear Planning and Zoning Board,

Gary Hunt

We are writing today to express our concern over the potential loss of over 90 hardwood trees and the historic character that has been protected at this location over the years.

Rafael Galvez

Elizabeth Smith

Our mission is to conserve and restore South Florida's ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and earth's biological diversity. In doing that we strive everyday to bring our native tree canopy from below 14% to over 30%, the current national average is 34%.

Katy Sorenson

Richard Cohen

Michael Thicksten

Pilar Rodriguez

Jaime Raich, Esq.

Florida and the Everglades ecosystems which include hardwood hammocks, are the most important as we are the bottleneck area of the Atlantic flyway where bird species are dependent on passing through every spring and fall during migration, safeguarding important tracts of trees is essential to the success of wildlife. It is up to the citizenry to protect and enhance our tree canopy, but as elected officials what you will vote on today will greatly impact the tree canopy of Coral Gables. Coral Gables has one of the strictest tree codes in Miami-Dade county and we were concerned when we heard from local residents just how many trees could be potentially lost by today's decision to split this property.

Sara Conde

Gary Milano

Martin Jensen

Sonia Succar Ferré

Advisory Board

Dennis Olle, Esq.

David Pearson

Dr. Thomas E. Lodge

George Gann

We have a number of individual members who have added to our database of information on this property over 60 years, we know that over 8 species of hawks have been spotted using this property, 4 species of woodpeckers including Pileated, large numbers of song birds during spring and fall migration, not to mention the species that have been spotted adjacent to the hammock and using the waterway such as numerous Ospreys and multiple heron species. This has been without formal data collection by our experts. Tropical Audubon would volunteer to conduct a survey of wildlife usage of this property to show just how important this area is. In order to conduct an accurate survey we would need to visit the site 2 times per month for a year and at different times of the day. We believe this data may be helpful to keep this property protected in perpetuity for future generations. Currently a concrete list of species does not exist to our knowledge and it is highly likely this property is home to some endangered and rare species in addition to those that are commonly seen in the area.

Executive Director

Laura Reynolds

Editor: Ana Lima

We have reviewed the tree survey from March 03-08-06 and the site plan. It seems to us that the maximum square footage is being proposed for development, thus leaving no place for relocation of the trees. According to the removal and relocation plans we count 93 hardwood trees that are at least 50 years of age or more, a more formal survey would need to be conducted as Robert Brennen suggested. According to a letter we received from an adjacent neighbor Lina Eichenwald, some of



these trees may have already been removed, thus making the mitigation less of a burden on the applicant. We request that a formal tree survey be conducted.

This application does not satisfy section 5 of the code: "That the proposed building site(s) maintains and preserves open space, promotes neighborhood compatibility, preserves historic character, maintains property values and enhances visual attractiveness of the area"

Coral Gables has gone to great lengths to maintain its historic buildings, tree canopy and sense of community by enforcing strict codes and guidelines for years making your city one of the highest quality of life locations in the county. Part of that success has been maintaining the historic character and tree canopy that makes people from all over the world want to live in these zip codes. The proof is your property values are the highest in Miami-Dade County. That will only change if you erode the strong sense of inherent value for things that do not have a price tag, like this remaining stand of trees and green space in the region that is so important for wildlife.

Your staff has recommended denial of this application citing the following: "Staff recommends denial of this application because it does not satisfy at least four (4) of the six (6) criteria per Zoning Code, Article 3, Development Review, Section 3-206, Building Site Determination, Subsection F. Staff has determined that the application satisfies only three (3) of six (6) of the Zoning Code's criteria for review."

We also remind you that Resolution No. HPR165LHD201102 (adopted 06.21.07), which designated residence and entire property as a Local Historic Landmark. Granting a lot split and changing the zoning is just a way to get around this historic designation. We feel that the historic designation is not just about buildings but also the hammock and green space. We ask you to uphold that 2007 resolution and protect the entire parcel from destruction.

We ask that you uphold the staff analysis and the 2007 historic designation of the entire property and deny this application.

Please contact me if I can be of further assistance in this matter at 786-543-1926, or via e-mail at director@tropicalaudubon.org

Sincerely,

Laura Reynolds
Executive Director

Cc: Mayor Jim Cason, Vice Mayor William Kerdyk, Commissioner Pat Keon, Commissioner Frank Quesada, Commissioner Vince Lago, City of Coral Gables Attorney Craig Leon